



SOUTHERN SCOTTSDALE

ARIZONA

A Brief History of the
McDOWELL ROAD CORRIDOR

A Brief History of Southern Scottsdale

Scottsdale was incorporated in 1951, a community then bounded by Camelback, Thomas, and Miller Roads and the Arizona Canal. Prior to incorporation the community had developed as a commerce center for local agricultural activity and was becoming known as a tourist destination and center for art and artists. Some of the early neighborhoods appeared as subdivisions associated with the post World War II building boom that took place in Arizona during the 1950's and 1960's. Much of the growth occurred in the county prior to being annexed into the city. Today these neighborhoods continue to contribute to the overall economic health of Scottsdale.

Commercial and retail developments were quick to follow this residential population growth. In 1957, Motorola Incorporated opened on McDowell Road, with an estimated 1,250 employees. The population in the area continued to grow. Major retail development took place with construction of the Valley's first enclosed mall. Located at the intersection of McDowell and Scottsdale Roads, the Los Arcos Shopping Mall opened in 1969. From the late 60's to early 90's McDowell Road had one of the highest 24 hour traffic counts of any road in the Valley, making it a prime location for retail activity. As growth and traffic patterns changed and new malls were built in surrounding communities, the role of Los Arcos Mall as a regional retail center diminished. The retail base then became focused on the large number of new car dealerships along McDowell and Scottsdale Roads, commonly referred to as "Motor Mile." This area once generated over \$10 million in sales tax for the City, but has seen sales diminish by 30-40% over the last three years, a time of serious National economic upheaval and change in that industry. Service retail for area neighborhoods remains, and the City of Scottsdale and private investors have committed resources and made significant financial commitments to the area.

Today, Southern Scottsdale is the most densely populated residential part of the City and its residents treasure its rich history and are hopeful about its future. Strategically positioned in the Greater Phoenix Area, the McDowell Road corridor offers easy access to surrounding municipalities, freeways, Sky Harbor Airport, regional parks, and regional shopping. Downtown Scottsdale, the heart of the City that boasts some of the Valley's best cultural opportunities and nightlife also lies within the boundaries of Southern Scottsdale.

This area also has strong ties to Arizona State University (ASU) and its neighboring municipalities. Many ASU students and faculty live in the southern portion of the City, given that the area provides much of the affordable housing available in the City. Property values, however, remain consistently higher than those areas in the Valley with similar demographics.

The tie to ASU has been further strengthened in the last few years and Southern Scottsdale is now home to SkySong, the ASU Scottsdale Innovation Center. SkySong is a mixed-use project consisting of 1.2 million square feet of office, research, and retail space located on 42 acres at the intersection of Scottsdale and McDowell Road. A public-private partnership with Arizona State University Foundation, SkySong is poised to become the premier research and development site in the greater Phoenix area. SkySong is built around a densely landscaped grand boulevard that will be lined by ground-floor shops and restaurants with offices above. The project is anchored by the SkySong shade structure – a visual icon and landmark. In addition, the Center will include apartment units, a hotel, retail space, and a park.

Southern Scottsdale and the McDowell Road area are an important part of the history and the future of the City. Both the public and private sectors are playing critical roles in the reinvestment and reinvigoration of the area. The solid residential neighborhoods, involved citizens, and business and property owners help provide energy and ideas for the continued growth in the area. Projects like SkySong, Lowes Home Improvement, and the Granite Reef Senior Center demonstrate the cooperative ways in which private investors and the local government have been working together to build on the economic and social foundation of the area.

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1960

Road through Papago Buttes opens and serves as the main east west thoroughfare. At the time, McDowell was one of the two routes that ran between the east valley and central Phoenix.

Papago Plaza Opens.
First Auto Dealer Opens - Ray Korte Chevrolet.
Scottsdale's first park, Eldorado Park, is built.
Los Arcos Mall Opens.

'60-'69

'70-'79

Major Flooding of the area closes down McDowell Rd. , and cuts off access to Los Arcos Mall, for 6-9 months. During this time, Fiesta Mall opens, followed by Paradise Valley Mall.

The concentration of car dealerships along McDowell grows until the early 1990's, with 32 major brands for sale. This area had the largest amount of dealers and brands than anywhere else in the state of Arizona.

1990's

Redevelopment discussions begin for Los Arcos mall area and the Loop 101 & 202 freeways open.

1980's

Los Arcos mall is demolished. Plans for a Coyote Arena fall through and land remains vacant.

2000

2004

Auto dealers along McDowell Road come together to market themselves as Scottsdale's "Motor Mile".

Granite Reef Senior Center opens on former Smitty's Site.

2006

2008

Los Arcos redevelopment site opens its doors for the first time in eight years as SkySong: The ASU Center for Innovation. Lowe's builds a new store on McDowell replacing a former K-Mart, which originated as Govway dept store.

Auto dealerships continue to relocate off the street or go out of business. Skysong continues to attract new users and is currently designing the third building.

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